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Shilpa Gupta: *Sun at Night*

The Curve, Barbican Centre

7 October 2021 – 6 February 2022

Media View: Wednesday 6 October 2021, 10am – 1pm

Free Admission

#ShilpaGupta @barbicancentre

Generously supported by the Henry Moore Foundation and using public funding from Arts Council England.



Shilpa Gupta, *For, In Your Tongue, I Cannot Fit*, 2017 –18

Sound installation with 100 speakers, microphones, printed text and metal stands

Commissioned by YARAT Contemporary Art Space and Edinburgh Art Festival

Photographer: Pat Verbruggen

Opening autumn 2021, Barbican Art Gallery is delighted to present the first major London solo exhibition by Mumbai-based artist **Shilpa Gupta**. One of South Asia's most critically acclaimed artists working today, Gupta's multidisciplinary practice encompasses a wide range of media and processes, from text, sculpture, video, photography, and sound which poetically explores physical and ideological boundaries and how, as individuals, we come to feel a sense of isolation or belonging. Shilpa Gupta's new commission opens in The Curve on Thursday 7 October 2021.

For the Barbican's 34th commission for The Curve, Gupta will present and build on her acclaimed project *For, In Your Tongue, I Cannot Fit* (2017–18) – an immersive multi-channel installation which comprises 100 microphones suspended above 100 metal spikes, each piercing a page inscribed with a fragmented verse of poetry by a poet incarcerated for their work, writings, or beliefs. Including poetry from the 8th to the 21st centuries such as by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Samuel Bamford, Irina Ratushinskaya, and the 14th century Azerbaijani poet Nesimi – whose writing inspired the title of the installation – the soundscape alternates between languages including Arabic, Azeri, Chinese, English, Hindi and Spanish where each microphone utters verses of poetry echoed by a chorus of its ninety-nine counterparts, as if standing together in solidarity. Through each poem, Gupta draws attention to the wider stories

and experiences of global histories, and by giving a voice to those who had been silenced, Gupta's haunting installation highlights the fragility and vulnerability of one's right to personal expression whilst raising urgent questions of free expression, censorship, confinement, and resistance.

In addition to reconfiguring *For, In Your Tongue, I Cannot Fit*, for its London premiere in the dramatic arc of *The Curve*, Gupta presents a new body of work extending on the research and themes present in the installation. This includes the artist's first pair of motion flapboards which further expand on Gupta's use of sound, language and the power of speech within her practice. Used historically as departure boards within airports or train stations —Gupta's boards, via independent utterance, enter an uneasy poetic dialogue with one another, interrogating dynamics of control and circumventions.

Shilpa Gupta said: *"When I first walked into the cavernous space of The Curve, it reminded me of a snaking back alley and perhaps even a spine of a curled-up creature. The curator's proposition to show the sound installation, For, In Your Tongue I Cannot Fit, made sense - to infuse The Curve - with voices and sounds that hover, take risk and persist through the being of our societies."*

Jane Alison, Head of Visual Arts, Barbican, said: *"I am thrilled that Shilpa Gupta will be staging our latest Curve commission at the Barbican. This will be the first time that there has been a significant showing of her work in London. Gupta is an extraordinary artist working with a hugely experimental and interdisciplinary practice that explores themes of identity, nation borders and notions of power combined with a poetic sensibility. For, In Your Tongue, I Cannot Fit was shown to great acclaim at the Venice Biennale in 2019 and it always seemed to me that this powerful work would be stunning in the Curve and that it was important for a London audience to be able to experience it."*

Shilpa Gupta (b.1976, Mumbai) lives and works in Mumbai, India, where she studied sculpture at the Sir J.J. School of Fine Arts from 1992 to 1997. Gupta has exhibited work internationally, with solo exhibitions at galleries including M HKA, Antwerp; Voorlinden Museum and Gardens, Wassenaar; YARAT Contemporary Art Center, Baku; Kiosk, Ghent; Bielefelder Kunstverein, Bielefeld; Centre d'art contemporain la synagogue de Delme, Delme; Kunsternes Hus, Oslo; Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Arnhem; Arnolfini, Bristol; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; OK Center for Contemporary Art, Linz; and Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi. In 2015, Gupta presented a two-person joint India-Pakistan exhibition by the Gujral Foundation in Venice and has participated in the Venice Biennale (2019); Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2018); Berlin Biennale (2014); New Museum Triennale (2009); Gwangju Biennale (2008); Yokohama Triennale (2008); and Liverpool Biennial (2006), among others.

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Notes to Editors

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Press images available online from the Barbican Newsroom

A link to the image sheets can be found in the 'Downloads' box on the top right-hand side of the page from: <https://www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room/shilpa-gupta>

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Public Information

The Curve, Barbican, London

Public information: 0845 120 7550 / www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery

Free admission

For more information on Barbican membership please visit:

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/membership>

Also on show, *Shilpa Gupta* is at Frith Street Gallery from 26 November 2021–22 January 2022. [Visit the website](#) for more information.

The Curve opening times

Monday–Sunday: 10am – 7pm

Exhibition

The exhibition has been commissioned by the Barbican, London. Supported by the Henry Moore Foundation and using public funding from Arts Council England.

Shilpa Gupta's multi-channel installation *For, In Your Tongue, I Cannot Fit*, was originally conceived as a joint commission by YARAT Contemporary Art Space, Baku and Edinburgh Art Festival, Edinburgh, in 2018.

Events

To find out more about specific events as they are confirmed, check the website for full listings: www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery

Book

A fully illustrated catalogue, co-published with Ridinghouse, to accompany the Shilpa Gupta: *Sun at Night* exhibition will be available. Featuring a commissioned essay with the feminist writer, activist and publisher Urvashi Butalia and an interview with the artist by Hilary Floe, this title is the twelfth in a publication series by Barbican Art Gallery that focuses on The Curve exhibition programme. Buy the catalogue in the Barbican Shop on Level G or online at www.barbican.org.uk/shop for £12.

The Curve

The Curve is the Barbican's free exhibition space that wraps around the back of the Concert Hall. Launched in May 2006, Curve Art is a series of new commissions in which contemporary artists respond to the distinctive architecture of the space. Artists who have previously made new commissions for The Curve are Tomas Saraceno (Argentina); Richard Wilson (Britain); Jeppe Hein (Denmark); Marjetica Potrč (Slovenia); Shirana Shahbazi (Switzerland/Iran); Hans Schabus (Austria); Huang Yong Ping (France/China); Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (Canada/Mexico); Peter Coffin (USA); Clemens von Wedemeyer (Germany); Robert

Kusmirowski (Poland); Céleste Boursier-Mougenot (France); John Bock (Germany); Damián Ortega (Mexico); Cory Arcangel (USA); Junya Ishigami (Japan); Song Dong (China); rANdom International (Britain); Geoffrey Farmer (Canada); Ayşe Erkmen (Germany/Turkey); United Visual Artists (Britain); Walead Beshty (USA/Britain); Roman Signer (Switzerland); Eddie Peake (Britain); Imran Qureshi (Pakistan); Bedwyr Williams (Wales); Richard Mosse (Ireland); John Akomfrah (Britain); Yto Barrada (Morocco), Francis Upritchard (New Zealand); Daria Martin (USA); Trevor Paglen (USA); and most recently Toyin Ojih Odutola (Nigeria/USA).

Barbican Art Gallery and The Curve

Our visual arts programme embraces art, architecture, design, fashion, photography and film. Many of our exhibitions explore the interconnections between disciplines, periods and cultures, and aim to imagine the world in new ways. Designers, artists and architects are our collaborators in this process.

We invest in the artists of today and tomorrow; The Curve is one of the few galleries in London devoted to the commissioning of new work. Through our activities we aim to inspire more people to discover and love the arts.

Our exhibitions are complemented by comprehensively researched catalogues and a full range of public events. We develop engaging online content for audiences and offer special tours for schools. In partnership with renowned museums and art galleries, many of our exhibitions travel to reach both national and international audiences.

About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over a million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas 1, 2 and 3, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, public spaces, a library, the Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). The [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#) are the Barbican's International Orchestral Partner, the [Australian Chamber Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court, and [Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble.

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